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*THE JOURNAL OF
THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY*



OCTOBER - NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 1980



Throssel Hole Priory is a training monastery, parish church and retreat centre following the Sōtō Zen Buddhist tradition. The Priory is affiliated with Shasta Abbey, whose Spiritual Director is Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Abbess. Shasta Abbey, Headquarters of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Sōtō Zen Church, is located in Mt. Shasta, California, U.S.A. The Priors of Throssel Hole Priory are disciples of Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett and follow her teaching.

Throssel Hole Priory and Journal

The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory is published as a service to people who are seriously interested in the practice of Buddhism. Through the Journal the Priory's members and friends share their understanding and meditation experience. We invite our readers to submit material arising from the practice of meditation to be considered for publication. Opinions expressed in each article are those of its author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Priors. The Journal is published bi-monthly (or if less frequently with an equivalently greater number of pages).

PRIORESSES: Rev. Teacher Kinzan Learman, O.B.C.
Rev. Teacher Andō Sacco, O.B.C.

TRUSTEES: Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Abbess
Rev. Rōshi Jishō Perry, O.B.C.
Rev. Teacher Daishin Morgan, O.B.C.

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Address Correspondence To:

The Priors,
Throssel Hole Priory,
Carrshield,
HEXHAM,
Northumberland,
NE47 8AL
(Telephone *Whitfield* (049 85) 204)

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DEAR FRIENDS AND READERS,

The Priory has once again seen changes in Priors during the past few months. Rev. Teigan Stevens returned to Shasta Abbey in late October and I arrived a few weeks earlier to replace him. Rev. Rokuzan Kroenke continued on as Prior until mid-January when he too returned to the Shasta community to continue his training there. At the beginning of the new year Rev. Teacher Kinzan Learman arrived from the Abbey. After recovering from jet-lag and after an intensive orientation she has assumed the position of Co-Prioress, replacing Rev. Rokuzan.

On behalf of the congregation we would like to thank Rev. Teigan and Rev. Rokuzan for all the hard work they put into running the Priory during their stay. Many of our lay trainees have expressed gratitude for the help and teaching they were given during the past year.

Rev. Teacher Kinzan Learman, like myself, is a woman priest and holds the rank of Teacher of Buddhism in the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. She has been a monk and disciple of Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett for eight years. We heartily welcome her to the Throssel community and wish her an enjoyable first stay in the north of England. We were prepared for a hard North-umbrian winter after hearing accounts of winters past, and have been pleasantly surprised by the recurrent sunshine and mild weather so far!

The plan at present is that Rev. Teacher Kinzan and I will be at the Priory until late September of this year, at which time two new priests from Shasta Abbey will take our places for the following year. These two will be the last of the American priests Rev. Rōshi Kennett will send over from the Abbey to officially act as Priors. The first group of five British priests is expected to be ready to return to Throssel in the autumn of 1982.

It is a pleasure to once again join the Throssel community and to meet many old friends. I was delighted to hear of how the congregation had grown and to see all the repairs and improvements made to the Priory's buildings and grounds since my stay in 1978. These are clearly the result of much hard work and training on the part of the Priors and lay trainees, reflecting the strength with which the Wheel of the Dharma is turning at Throssel Hole Priory.

We invite you to join us this year in sharing this Dharma. It is the great gift which our Master, Rev. Rōshi Kennett has graciously offered to us. No other thing brings greater joy and deeper meaning to our lives than This. We are grateful to be able to take part in Its unfolding within the European Sangha.

We look forward to meeting and hearing from you. Best wishes for your successful training in 1981.

In gasshō,

Andō Sacco

Rev. Teacher Andō Sacco, O.B.C.

"The unsurpassed, penetrating and perfect Truth

Is seldom met with even in a hundred, thousand myriad kalpas.

Now we can see and hear it, we can remember and accept it;

I vow to make the Buddha's Truth one with myself."

(Lecture Verse - recited by trainees prior to Abbot's lecture in Meditation Hall, Zen is Eternal Life by Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, Dharma Press, 1976, p.302.)

NEWS OF THE BRITISH MONKS AT SHASTA ABBEY

Included in this issue of the Journal are several articles written in the past year by British monks who are training at Shasta Abbey. We regularly publish articles they offer and from time to time inform you of their progress while at the Abbey. Several of the Britons took their vacations in England last summer and early autumn and many of you were able to meet them during their visits to the Priory. They were very pleased to see some of you and all the progress that has occurred over the past few years.

Rev. Teacher Daishin Morgan is currently overseeing both the Guest Department and the Books and Gifts Department, as well as being a part-time personal assistant to Rev. Rōshi Kennett.

Rev. Jimyo Krasner successfully completed her Kessei ceremonies last October. She was qualified as a Parish Priest after fulfilling her first three years of study in the fall of 1979 and has been training in the "Teacher" Programme since then. Her work at the Abbey is as Head of the Sewing Room.

Four more of the British monks received their Parish Priest Certificates last September. Revs. Myōhō Harris, Chūshin Passmore, Meian Elbert, and Saidō Kennaway are now qualified to perform all the ceremonies and functions of a priest at a Priory. It is upon receiving this rank that a trainee uses the initials O.B.C. (Order of Buddhist Contemplatives) after his or her name.

Rev. Myōhō continues her work sculpting altar statues at the Abbey and assisting the Sacristan. Revs. Meian, Chūshin, and Saidō all work in the Guest Department at present, looking after the lay training programmes.

Last spring Revs. Jigen Bartley and Mokugen Kublicki successfully completed their Chief Junior training, and in the autumn they received the Transmission from Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett. Having completed their noviceship they have changed their kesas from black to the gold colour of the junior monk. Rev. Jigen is now running the Abbey's Books and Gifts Department and Rev. Mokugen works in the Publicity Department, where her artistic skills are being put to good use.

We offer our congratulations to the British monks who have taken the next step in their religious training. Each formal step in the study of a priest recognizes a deepening of spiritual commitment and maturity of training. They are the visible signs of the continuing Transmission of the Buddha's Truth. It is this Transmission which is and will be the foundation of a full training monastery at Throssel Hole Priory.

(For an explanation of the ranks of the priesthood of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Sōtō Zen Church see "A Note on Transmission and Priestly Rank" by Rev. Rōshi Daizui MacPhillamy in the July 1978 issue of The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory. -ed.)

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JOURNAL SUBSCRIBERS

We apologize for the delay in sending you this issue of *The Journal of Throssel Hole Priory*, and thank you for your patience in waiting.

The annual Journal subscription rate is £4.25. The date of the last issue you will receive under your current subscription is indicated by the code in the upper right hand corner of your address label, e.g., 3/81 (March 1981). Please be sure to renew your subscription well in advance.

THE REAL QUESTION

Rev. Jimyo Krasner, O.B.C.

(Reprinted with permission from The Journal of Shasta Abbey, May-June 1980.)

I have heard it said that a person comes to Zen with three questions, the one that is asked, the one he is aware of but does not put into words, and the real question buried in his heart of which he is usually unaware. I had been training for years before I had any idea of what my real question was; I found out it was in fact something very simple.

I discovered this after a recent Shōsan (spiritual question-and-answer) ceremony. On the surface nothing unusual had happened: I had asked a question and been given an answer. Yet I found myself ecstatically happy about it for no clear reason. Later when I recalled the situation I realized that something completely different had been going on underneath; I had asked, silently, by my whole attitude, "Am I doing OK?" and the answer, conveyed by a total acceptance of me, had been "Yes, you are doing fine."

"Am I doing OK?" This had been the question I had been asking, in one way or another, all my life. I had asked many questions and done many different things, yet always I had been looking for a sign, a gesture of approval, some external proof that there was nothing wrong with me. In my childhood it had seemed to be relatively easy, as I had been fairly successful in most things I attempted. As I grew older, it had become harder and harder to gain the reassurance I thought I so desperately needed. Becoming more aware of the problem, I had tried to solve it by becoming more and more competent, by being better than anyone else at whatever I did. When this did not seem to help I had worked very hard at "being one of the crowd", finding somewhere where

I would be totally accepted by others. Yet neither competence nor social success prevented my feeling that something was lacking.

When I first came to the monastery I was completely unaware of the problem. I was also unaware that it was in fact a spiritual question. "Am I doing OK?" actually meant "Do I have the Buddha Nature?" It was a question I was to keep repeating in many different forms before I realized what I was asking. I was unaware that I felt inadequate in any way, for was I not successful at most things I attempted, and ready to try anything? Even if the possibility of my not believing in the Buddha Nature had been mentioned to me, I would not have believed it. For I *thought* I believed in it; I did not realize that an intellectual understanding was not nearly enough.

For a while after I became a monk the problem seemed to disappear beneath the initial excitement of postulancy, ordination, leaving England and coming to the Abbey, and so on. Eventually, however, I found myself back in the same old routine of trying to be competent, trying to be accepted. But in the monastery the standards of the outside world do not apply. I could no longer be successful in the old way; I no longer won approval for what I was doing. Others seemed to be passing me by, to be getting the jobs and responsibilities I craved. It is doubtful if it was actually happening as much or as often as I thought, for my fear put everything out of proportion. To envy others' success may be normal and human, but my reaction verged on panic. I found I wasn't anything special, I was just another monk. I had often said this was what I wanted to be, for I realized that deep down it was all I wanted, yet still I was convinced that if I wasn't doing better than anyone else I must be a complete failure. Most of all I was frightened that perhaps I didn't have the Buddha Nature, perhaps I couldn't make it. Within me was this very real fear, a suppressed cry: "What's wrong with me? If I'm doing OK give me some proof!"

When I realized all this I expected things to change drastically. They didn't change, however; in fact they seemed to get worse. I had been told long before that to see what needed to be done and then not to do it was incredibly painful; I found out this was true, but I did not seem to *know* what to do. I tried to fight the problem, to pretend it didn't exist, to make myself believe I had the Buddha Nature. But it was merely the self fighting the self and it didn't help.

I think it was my complete desperation and feeling of lack of anything or anyone left to turn to that pushed me back into meditation. I had to sit still, for there was absolutely nothing else to do. And when I did this, I found the proof I was looking for within myself; I found that I was doing OK after all. I didn't realize this suddenly, but gradually as my meditation deepened. I had found something-- I wasn't sure what, yet I knew it would never let me down, that within my hanging on to it there was no clinging, and that my previous concern with success and failure was irrelevant. I was fine just as I was.

After this my life did begin to change. The ways it changed were fairly subtle, almost unnoticeable. I was more able to act without being concerned about my personal success or failure, and therefore was more likely to do just what needed to be done. My relationships with other people improved, for I was no longer so inclined to take offense, to see any misunderstanding as a criticism, and a criticism as a direct attack on me. I was also able to see my previous state of suffering as true compassion. For the fact that I could no longer be successful in a worldly manner had forced me to look within, searching for the source of the kōan. Only when I was fighting with my back to the wall had I been able to see that the wall didn't exist and there was nothing to fight. The kindest Kanzeon is indeed found in hell.

This is not something which happened once and is now all over. Training is a continual process; I often find myself slipping back into old habits, old fears, etc. Also, faith mingled with brief flashes of understanding does not amount to unshakeable certainty; I can still be shaken very easily; it requires continual vigilance not to continue exactly as before. The events I have described are merely part of the ongoing and continual process of training, and the natural result of it. What I have actually learned from this can best be summed up by what Dōgen was told hundreds of years ago, "Remain still and quiet in the very depths of your own question and the meaning will manifest itself."

* * *

BUDDHIST FESTIVALS

Many traditional Buddhist Festivals are celebrated at the Priory throughout the year. This year we have scheduled most of these celebrations so that they coincide with weekend retreats and sesshins. These retreats will be conducted as usual and, in most cases, will conclude with the appropriate ceremony for each occasion. Each festival commemorates the life and teaching of the Buddha and Zen Patriarchs or emphasizes a significant aspect of spiritual training. The relevance of each festival to our daily training will be discussed during the retreats.

The FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS (Hanamatsuri), also called Dharma Day, is the celebration of the Buddha's birth, life and teaching.

"The wonderful udumbara flower bloomed upon this day and the meaning of this festival is found within its blossom; even as its sweet fragrance fills the whole universe so does Buddhism cover the world."

(From the Hanamatsuri Offertory.)

We will celebrate this great festival during the May 8-10 retreat.

ZAZEN--THE PLACE OF NO RESISTANCE AND NO REQUESTS

Rev. Myōhō Harris, O.B.C.

*(Reprinted with permission from The Journal of
Shasta Abbey, May-June 1980.)*

Within each of us is the place of no resistance and no requests; existing in the midst of bliss, pain, boredom and confusion, it is there when we can see it and there when we cannot, for it is our True Self. By living from this place we see how all things are in constant motion, yet the true nature of change is that which never moves. This still centre enables us to experience the living reality of the Cosmic Buddha within our daily lives. (And it is by living from the Heart of Zazen that Buddhism is kept alive.)

This place can only be known through training and meditation, for it is pure Zazen itself. We cannot grab at the Truth, nor work it out in our heads. We just go through the day doing our best in all things and allow the silent awareness of meditation to reveal both the questions and the answers, for both come from the same place. No amount of books, discussions or erudition can lead us on their own to the stillness, for it is beyond the grasp of the intellect. Whether the Heart remains hidden within our being or becomes the place in which we sit, in the silent radiance of that which is eternity itself, depends on how we choose to live our lives.

We must be careful not to be influenced by the pressures of a society which tries to tell us how to think, look and be. By acting upon fear, greed and delusion our bodies and minds become coarsened to such an extent that the immaculacy of our True Nature is lost to us. But if we can respond to the voice in our Hearts then we allow the Truth to arise

naturally from within us. Unfortunately the world teaches us a great deal about the "all is different" but little of the "all is one". Within the body of the Buddha there are many different shapes and sizes but no divisions. The "all is different" is constantly giving expression to the "all is one", for the House of the Cosmic Buddha is itself all things.

From my own experience I know that I came into existence because of a mistake which caused the arising of the delusion that the Cosmic Buddha no longer loved me. From this delusive thought sprang duality (self) and I mentally separated myself from my fellow men and all that surrounded me. Fear brought competition and judgementalism into existence and I lost sight of the place of no resistance and no requests. Everything was put on a scale of false values with the delusive idea of a separate self at the top of the list. The open-handed all acceptance became the closed fist of defense--and the wheel of karma turned, and will continue to turn with painful results until we learn how to live from that which is our True Nature.

Reality is a straight line of Buddhas and not one man at the top of a pile with twenty squashed beneath him. All are loved equally, all are given limitless gifts but not all know how to accept them. In order to be able to receive we have to know how to give, and we give by being what we are and being it totally. "The Buddhas and Patriarchs...are not individual and they are not the same as each other. Each expresses the Truth in his own way as do all things; they do that which is their way and express the Lord within it."

There are many ways by which we can deny ourselves the gift (which is our birthright) of knowing our True Nature. If we try to be more than we can be (i.e. God) and want to save the world, or if we allow ourselves to be less than we are by indulging in old fears, then

1. "Kyojūkaimon Commentary" by Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C., Abbess; Shasta Abbey, 1977, p. 12.

we create a disturbance. This does not mean that training is not necessary or that the limitations of our humanity can prevent us from becoming one with the Cosmic Buddha. It means that we should meditate so that we may listen to every fiber of our being with every fiber of our being and do that which we know in our guts to be "good".

Zen training doesn't give us anything that we don't already have, nor does it make us into extraordinary people. It teaches us how to live in our natural state, which is pure Zazen.

The Heart of Zazen is the still glow in the centre of our being. This is the centre of the lotus, the centre of the universe and is the source of all existence. Purity and immaculacy are the natural state of body and mind, and they, like the Truth, arise within us, not from any external source. Training doesn't show us how to find immaculacy; it shows us how to see the mistakes which cause the clouds of delusive duality that prevent us from knowing That Which Was, Is and Always Will Be within us.

Move, move, my defilement-free One!
Come, come, hear, hear,
A joy springs up in me!²

And a joy will literally spring up within us. "The Treasure House will open naturally"³ and remain open for us as long as pure Zazen is done.

Pain and suffering still exist for Zazen does not make us into supermen without feelings (in fact it makes us more sensitive to what's going on), nor does it mean that we are no longer responsible for

2. From the "Litany of the Great Compassionate One", *The Shasta Abbey Book of Ceremonies*, Shasta Abbey Press, 1979, p. 27.

3. Dōgen Zenji, "Fukanzazengi" (Zazen Rules), in *The Shasta Abbey Book of Ceremonies*, p. 23.

our actions, for we are always subject to the laws of karma. What it does is allow us to enter the place of no resistance and no requests, the place of "non-action and non-seeking"⁴ and to sit straight and still, with the strength of a fluid rock, within our daily actions. It means that we are no longer tossed around on a sea of personal opinions, judgements, fears and emotionalism. Bliss and darkness come and go; only this place never moves, never changes, for it is reality itself. And when we make a mistake and fall flat (and I've found that there can seem to be long periods of time when nothing goes right), we learn the lesson, get up and go on without carrying a burden of guilt or self-judgement.

The more we live from this place, the more our awareness naturally increases and we're able to constantly improve the quality of life for self and others without striving to become Buddha, for the mind of Zazen is Truth itself and "real immaculacy does not demand immaculacy".⁵ There is just the "going, going, going on beyond...always BECOMING Buddha".⁶

The trainee is told that he must bow endlessly for he must always live within the Heart of Zazen which is itself true bowing--for bowing and meditation are not different; they are our natural form. Although our old karma can still act upon us, fear and doubt (which are the result of memories) are known to be only shadows, and shadows cannot hide in brightness. Because we see things differently we think differently and words have new meanings. Old ideas of love, responsibility and sitting still become flat, lifeless concepts which only limit our potential. We have to learn how to express ourselves in new ways and a

4. Dōgen's "Shushōgi", *Zen is Eternal Life*, Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C.; Dharma Publishing, 1976, p.290.

5. From the life of Bashumitsu Sonja in Keizan Zenji's "Denkōroku", *Zen is Eternal Life*, p. 227.

6. "The Scripture of Great Wisdom", *Zen is Eternal Life*, p. 278.

beautiful and interesting world opens up around and within us, for there is no difference between inside and outside as the seer and the seen are of the same substance. Suffering still exists but with the big difference that we can see *why* it exists and what to do about it. We're no longer victims of circumstance. In not being afraid to die we do not deny ourselves the right to live. We get up in the morning not because we ought to but because we WANT to. Even when negative feelings arise (and they will) there is always that place of no opposition which is untouched by such thoughts. We choose to follow the Truth instead of the negativity because that is the natural way to be. Gradually the glowing centre within us grows, at times it radiates throughout our entire being and beyond, cleansing every cell. We feel clean from the inside out.

We don't mind growing old and dying because former concepts of time no longer exist. There is no beginning or end. We're born here, die there as waves rising and sinking on a limitless and indefinable ocean. The waves are not the ocean and yet there is nothing in them which is not of the ocean. The whole of the ocean can be found within each wave, yet that wave is not the ocean.

One wave does not become another wave. Life is life and death is death. All that we have is this moment. This moment is now. Now is the life of the Buddha, now is eternity and eternity is the ocean.

The Cosmic Buddha did, does and always will love us, There never was nor will there be any separation. Once, whilst meditating, I saw a picture of a huge pit filled with beings who were pointing guns at their own heads whilst shouting "Don't shoot!" Each gun had a different label--fear, doubt, etc. The pit was in the hand of the Buddha, and although there was much suffering in that pit, He was loving them, waiting for the day when they would put down their guns so that they might know Him. We've all done our

share of gun-holding and we all know that there is a better way to live or we would not have come to training.

In the place of no resistance and no requests, there lies a joy which is patiently waiting for the day when we put down our guns so that it may spring up within us.

Om to the One Who leaps beyond all fear!
Having adored Him, may I enter into the
heart of the Noble, Adored Kanzeon!
His life is the completion of meaning;
it is pure,
IT IS THAT WHICH MAKES ALL BEINGS VICTORIOUS.⁷

7. "The Litany of the Great Compassionate One,"
The Shasta Abbey Book of Ceremonies, p. 27.

* * *

WORK WEEK

With only two priests presently in residence at the Priory, there is little opportunity to approach some of the major projects that need doing. We therefore, invite anyone interested to join us for a week of work at the Priory from June 15-21. During this time we hope to complete the remainder of the exterior stone work on the ground floor of the new Meditation Hall, as well as deal with other repairs to the Priory buildings. Lay trainees who have been to at least two retreats at the Priory are welcome. During this week the daily schedule will include a morning and evening meditation, three solid meals, and extended work periods. No formal lectures would be given. The cost for room and board will be £2 per day. Any number of days would be helpful if you cannot come for the full week. We look forward to working together with congregation members in the spirit of selfless training.

LAY TRAINING PROGRAMME - 1981

This year Throssel Hole Priory has a full schedule of retreats and sesshins to offer you. The Prioresses welcome you to join us in our religious practice. Due to rising costs we have, unfortunately, had to raise most of our fees at the beginning of this year. The new fees are included below. If you are coming to the Priory for the first time, please send us the full retreat fee with your application. After the first visit, please send a deposit in advance of 50% of the fee for your intended stay, if possible.

WEEKEND RETREATS

Weekend retreats are scheduled for the following dates:

March 6-8	August 14-16
April 3-5	September 11-13 Dōgen Day,
May 8-10 Festival of	25-27
Flowers, 29-31	October 9-11 Bodhidharma Day
June 5-7, 26-28	November 6-8, 20-22
July 3-5, 24-26	December 4-6

The cost of a weekend retreat is now: £15 if one is attending for the first time, £12 for any subsequent retreats. There is a discount of £1 per person if a group of three or more people register and come together to a retreat.

SESSHINS

Three sesshins (intensive meditation retreats) will be held at the Priory this year:

April 18-25	Jūkai Sesshin	£35
July 31 - August 5	Denkōe Sesshin	£25
December 18-23	Rōhatsu Sesshin	£25

The main sesshin of the year, Jūkai, has been moved to the spring (Easter week), which is the traditional time, and will be a full week long this year. Jūkai (literally "Ten Precepts Meeting") is a time when we make a special effort to deepen our commitment to Zen

training. Special ceremonies during the sesshin express the unfolding of fundamental aspects of spirituality. Through meditating in stillness and activity together, our purpose for living is clarified. During the Jūkai sesshin those who wish to do so may formally receive the Precepts, becoming lay Buddhists in the ceremony of lay ordination.

The theme of the Denkōe sesshin is Keizan Zenji's "Denkōroku" or "Transmission of the Light" (see *Zen is Eternal Life*, p. 191). The usual sesshin schedule of intensive sitting and working meditation will include lectures and discussions focusing on the examples of the training of some of the early Buddhist Ancestors in our lineage. Keizan Day will be celebrated in a special Memorial Service.

The Festival of Shakyamuni Buddha's Enlightenment is celebrated by the winter Rōhatsu sesshin. The sesshin will close with the Enlightenment Day Ceremony.

The length of the latter two sesshins has been increased to five days (from last year's four days). Many trainees have experienced the benefit of longer stays at the Priory. We would like to emphasize, however, that if you cannot participate in the full length of a sesshin, please be sure to let us know. In most cases, one can arrange to leave early, if necessary. Please book early for all sesshins as space is limited.

RESIDENT TRAINING PROGRAMME

Serious lay students of Zen are welcome to participate in the on-going residential training programme at Throssel Hole Priory. A longer stay at the Priory can be very helpful in establishing a solid practice and in harmonizing the Mind of Meditation with daily life. The fees for joining in the residential programme are calculated on a sliding scale basis:

1 day (overnight)	£5.00	2 weeks	£39.00
2 days	£9.00	3 weeks	£49.75
1 week	£25.00	1 month	£60.00

PLEASE NOTE: The Priory will be closed April 26-May 2.

From Great Compassion
comes forth
the Pure Dharma Body,
unborn, uncreated;
we pray that the darkness
of our delusions
may be illuminated
by True Compassion.

We, the followers
of our Great Master
Shakyamuni,
bow in gratitude
to Him
for His goodness
and compassion as we
celebrate His birthday.

CEREMONIAL AND ZEN TRAINING

Rev. Chūshin Passmore, O.B.C.

(Reprinted with permission from The Journal of Shasta Abbey, May-June 1980.)

From west to east, unseen, flowed out
the Mind of India's greatest Sage and,
to the source, kept true as an unsul-
lied stream is clear.

White Robes and Koromos

To many contemporary minds, religious ritual has become a subject of scorn, condemned as an outward superstition maintained by priests to entice gullible people into a belief in God, chiefly by appealing to their emotional needs and basic fears. It is certainly true that ritual, lacking the nourishment of sincere faith and a loving understanding, and performed out of ignorance or a sense of duty, soon deteriorates into a mechanical charade, exclusive, empty, and boring. For the purposes of this article, I prefer to use the word *ceremony* rather than ritual so as to distinguish the truly spiritual and willing act of love and service from all those tired and habitual acts which so often fill up the lives of men, until all that seems to remain is a constant ache and deadness - the cold ashes of empty ritual.

We begin to meditate in order to break through this circle of empty ritual, to discover and embrace our own Buddha Nature, thereby gradually and patiently approaching the ideal as represented by the Cosmic Buddha, the ideal of Immaculacy and Absolute Stillness. We do not meditate in order to become stone or ivory Buddhas, but to learn how to be fully *alive* and *active* in the service of the Lord of the House. In this regard, the ceremonies of Sōtō Zen are invaluable aids to our meditation, being both deeply spiritual and

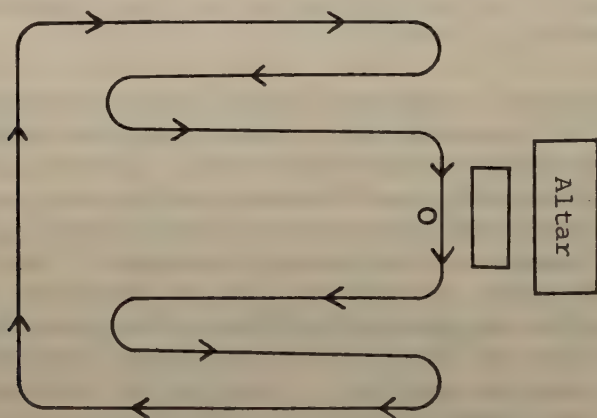
soundly practical. When properly understood, they help us to realize and appreciate the profound Teaching of the Heart of Fugen - *activity in stillness*. White robes and koromos are worn to celebrate our inherent Buddha Nature and to joyfully acknowledge the Buddha Nature in others. Every ceremony can thus become a mutual sharing in the Buddha-dharma, and not remain on the level of ritual or expertise. This is a very important point. All ceremonial must arise naturally from a pure and compassionate heart, otherwise the incessant attention to detail and outward forms could settle into an unhealthy obsession, devoid of any real spiritual value. I would urge the reader to bear this point well in mind during the remainder of the article so as to avoid possible misunderstandings.

In Chinese Buddhism, there is a traditional ceremony called *Serpentining or Dragoning the Buddha's Name*. The monks of the Amida sect, in moving meditation, walk slowly round the Meditation Hall in a winding, serpentine procession, while chanting the prayer, "Homage to the Buddha Amitabha".¹ At Shasta Abbey, important ceremonies such as Wesak Day and the commemorative ceremonies held each year for Dōgen Zenji and Keizan Zenji, as well as many memorials, follow a similar pattern, although the details may differ. The greater part of this article will be devoted to a detailed examination of this particular form of ceremony because it illustrates very clearly the beauty and significance of ceremonial in Sōtō Zen.

Before the start of the ceremony, the monks are standing in three rows on either side of the altar facing each other. The Precentor, Celebrant and two assistants enter in procession. The Celebrant approaches the altar to make the customary incense

1. Described in *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900-1950*, by Holmes Welch, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1967, p. 58.

offering, and three senior monks step forward to collect from the altar, respectively, an ornamental platter covered with coloured paper lotus petals, an asperge for sprinkling water and a hand-held incense burner. The three monks then return to their places in the front row to the left of the altar. After offering incense, the Celebrant turns and bows, together with all monks, as the Precentor strikes a small bell. The Celebrant begins to move and the bell is struck again, the signal for monks to turn either towards or away from the altar and for the dragoning to begin. The diagram below gives a clearer picture of the overall shape and movement of the procession as it proceeds around the Hondō.



During the slow, graceful procession an appropriate scripture such as "The Adoration of the Buddha's Relics" or "The Scripture of Kanzeon Bosatsu" is sung, while behind the Celebrant the flower petals are scattered in all directions, the holy water which the priest has blessed is sprinkled on all sides, and the incense holder moved in a wide, all-embracing arc, the perfumed smoke soon permeating the entire Hondō. When the dragoning brings the Celebrant in front of the altar once more, and the monks back to their original places, the Precentor strikes the bell as the Celebrant and monks turn to face each other. The bell is struck once more and all bow at the same time, the

end of the procession being a reflection of the beginning. The Celebrant returns to his usual place and the Precentor recites the Offertory, at the end of which all join in the Three Homages. There is a final incense offering, and three bows conclude the ceremony.

Embedded in this short and uncomplicated form of service there is a richness and variety of Teaching which has been gradually emerging for me during the last two years of training, and all ceremonies, celebrated with an open and believing mind, offer us the same depth of Teaching, if only we are prepared to study in detail what is, in fact, going on.

By taking refuge in the Sangha we choose to train *together* without *interfering* in the training of others, quietly going about our own business, while at the same time remaining open and sympathetic to the needs of our fellow trainees. During the dragoning, we move in a large, clockwise circle, thus demonstrating that we are willing and *eager* to turn the Wheel of the Law in the right direction along with our fellow trainees, and, by taking great care not to get too close or too far away from the person walking in front of us, we acknowledge our responsibility to be always *mindful* of the results of our actions, and to be responsive and considerate to where others are in their training. It is not enough just to feel inside or talk about the Four Wisdoms (Charity, Tenderness, Benevolence, and Sympathy); we must strive to develop and make manifest these spiritual qualities in all our everyday relationships - with those we work with, the objects we use, the food we eat, the animals we look after, the T.V. program we watch, in short, with the personal world we create for ourselves at each and every moment.

There are also smaller movements within the greater circle, and thus it *appears* at times that the monks are moving in opposite directions from each other, but this is only a temporary illusion, which

illustrates in a direct and graphic manner the Teaching of the Great and Small circles,² and the sensitive intermarriage of the Real with the Apparent. It is very dangerous to judge another's training even though he may appear to be in a complete mess. We are not God, and we see only a minute fragment of the landscape. If we believe that all beings possess the Buddha Nature, then we must learn to sympathize with the humanity of others when they appear to be going wrong in training and moving in a direction different from ourselves, knowing in the stillness of our hearts that the Cosmic Buddha is caring for *all his creatures* at all times and in every place. The ceremony cuts



through the duality of good/bad, worldly/spiritual, lay-trainee/priest, Master/disciple, while recognizing and emphasizing that we are human and do indeed live in the world. It also teaches that, for our spiritual health and safety, it is imperative to follow the Teaching of the Master in humility and gratitude. At

2. See Tōzan's Five Ranks for further explanation. One account is found in Charles Luk's *Ch'an and Zen Teaching, Series Two*, Berkeley, Shambala, 1971, Chapter 4.

the very moment we feel crushed inside a weak and restricted body, the great and limitless circle of the Buddhas and Ancestors is living and breathing within that very body, at the very centre of that small and narrow circle. Like the sweet dew of the Dharma, Heaven covers the whole earth, and like a needle plunged in water, so does earth penetrate Heaven.

The ceremony not only expresses the Recognition of the Buddha Nature in all things, but also the Transmission of the Dharma. When Rōshi Kennett, acting as Celebrant at these ceremonies, turns and begins the dragoning, all the monks immediately follow her. In a short while the circle is complete, with no beginning or end, everyone doing his or her part and everyone seen to be fully equal in the eyes of the Lord of the House. The Wheel is joyfully turning and the Truth of the Dharma glorified. The end is in the beginning, and yet we go on. But we are in mortal danger if we proudly or stubbornly refuse to follow in the footsteps of the Master, and ignore the final rule of the Taitaikōhō:

For you seniors will always exist;
there will always be someone senior
to you both when you are a first
grade unsui and when you become a
Buddha.³

For although the opposites are transcended and our Buddhahood recognized, the initial humility must never be lost, or hardness and pride will set in to pollute and cloud over the positive signs of one's training. This is why it is so important to always listen to the Master, without allowing one's selfish opinions to obscure the Truth, and to learn how to truly serve others:

3. Unless otherwise noted, all quotes appearing in this article are taken from *Zen is Eternal Life* by Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett or *The Shasta Abbey Book of Ceremonies*. -ed.

The retainer serves his Lord
The emperor; his father does the child
Obey; without obedience there is
No filial piety and, if there is
No service, no advice.

(The Most Excellent Mirror - Samadhi)

During the dragoning procession, each monk passes by, or crosses, every other monk in the community, including the Master, although during the passing the monks appear to be moving in opposite directions. In addition to this, each monk walks the path that the Master has taken, and, of equal significance, the Master walks over the place where each monk has stood. There is no separate self. We are also reminded of the words of the Shushōgi:

...For they, in the past, were
as we are now, and we will be as
they in the future.

There is in this a constant, moving recognition of the All is One *and* All is Different. As we slowly pass by our fellow trainees we are silently acknowledging their willingness to train themselves and they acknowledge the same willingness in us. Living as a true Sangha, we share the myriad twists and turns of training, supporting and encouraging our fellow trainees in their search for the Dharma - together we trace the long and circuitous path of the Ketchimyaku, the unbroken bloodline of the Buddhas and Ancestors. By choosing to train together as Buddhists, willingly and with compassion (for self and others), we also choose to follow the example of Shakyamuni, instead of *indulging* in the ways and means of the world. It is sometimes difficult and painful to go against the accepted standards of society, or more difficult still, the standards of one's family and friends, and the convoluted turning of the procession reflects this. But it also reflects our determination to keep going, on and on, whatever the cost, certain that our faith in the Great Circle of the Buddhas is being strengthened and rewarded with every breath that we take.

After taking the first few steps to start the dragoning, the Celebrant turns and bows to the monk who is following behind, while he, standing at the other corner of the altar, at the same time bows to the Celebrant. This monk then crosses in front of the altar, turns, and bows to the monk following behind *him*, who returns the bow, before crossing in front of the altar, to turn and bow to the monk behind *him*; this pattern, of monk bowing to monk, is repeated throughout the procession, without the least hesitation or exception, so that the accepting and passing on of Rōshi Kennett's initial bow is transmitted right down the line. Meanwhile, Rōshi Kennett continues on her way, doing her own training. Here, the Master recognizes the spiritual worth of the disciple and is directly and openly transmitting the Buddha-dharma to him, out of her great and enduring compassion. This transmission, like a living flame of love, courses down the entire procession, until the Master eventually completes the circle, arriving at the altar once more to receive and acknowledge the bow of the monk who has just crossed in front of the altar before her - "end and beginning return unto the source". To my mind, this is one of the most beautiful and profound moments in all the ceremonies of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, and it actually *shows* us how Zen training works upon us, directly from heart to heart, the Master and disciple sharing a loving partnership in the World of the Dharma.

Throughout the broad, circular movements of the dragoning, there rests a calm centre of stillness, the stillness of meditation, and it is from this centre of peace and stillness deep within us, amidst the tumult of the world, that the true offering is made. A ceremony which lacks this essential spiritual marrow, the offering of merit, *is* but an empty ritual, dull, self-centred, and worldly, and no amount of symbolism, sound, or colour will revive it. Although it is a worthwhile practice to study the form and substance of ceremonies, one should not allow a mere intellectual understanding to satisfy one's search

for meaning, but train oneself to express the correct attitude of mind, that of respect and gratitude, in the smallest detail of one's life, by carefully searching the heart so that the *offering* of one's own Buddhist training can breathe true life into the ceremony. This is made clear and emphasized by the offering of flowers, water, and incense during the procession itself.

In the General Offertory 1, it states:

We sincerely pray that the mountain
of his/her karma shall vanish and
the flowers of the Mind bloom in the
springtime of enlightenment. Let us
pray that we may all ascend the brilliant altar and realise the Truth.

The many-coloured petals that one of the priests scatters throughout the length and breadth of the Hondō bring to mind those flowers of enlightenment, the exquisite fruits of meditation which indeed are the Four Wisdoms, by which we help all beings to cross over to the other shore.

In the Offertory for the Festival of the Buddha's Birth (Hannamatsuri), it states:

His three hundred sermons are for
us as rain is for trees and grass;
just as rain causes drooping flowers
to flourish so His words touch our
heavy hearts; at this very moment
the Rain of the Dharma pours into
the Lake of Kindness.

And this is *exactly* what is happening during these ceremonies. The sprinkling of the holy water in all the ten directions serves to recall the universal reach of the Dharma, the radiant Teaching which sustains the world and which is always being offered to us, *at this very moment*. It also represents and

affirms the Water of the Spirit, or the Flow of Immaculacy, which washes through the core, skin, blood and bones of all things. Our daily efforts in training open us up more and more to the cleansing and bathing in the vibrant warmth of the Lord's love. However, it is not sufficient to make just one act of faith, but countless acts of faith during training, without expecting praise or anticipating future rewards, simply because no other *way of being* makes sense. We train for training's sake.

The Offertory for Segaki contains the following verse:

The Body of the Buddha permeates the universe and manifests itself in front of all of us; there is no place where it does not so manifest itself; it does so for every relationship and in all need yet it is still in its own true place; the seas of its merit cannot be counted.

Body and mind are truly one. The delicate perfume of the incense, gently wafted to every corner of the Hondō, and beyond, becomes for us the true reality of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, which pervades the whole world. The incense-smoke also helps to remind us of the power of meditation to reach into, explore, and excavate the darkest regions of the mind so that we can honestly confront and finally convert our personal store of karma. It is by such a variety of means that a ceremony can clarify and reveal the Teaching, but to avoid its lapsing into a tedious religious exercise, heavy in symbolism but drained of all meaning or merit, the Right Mind of respect and compassion must always be feeding the roots of a ceremony, without which it would wither into ritual.

Up to this point I have concentrated upon certain elements of formal ceremonial which, if properly understood, can deepen our experience of Zen. Before

closing, it may be helpful to go beyond the formal aspects of ceremonial and to briefly consider the *ceremony of everyday life*.

Buddhism teaches that *all activity is permeated with pure Zazen*, and this basic truth leads us quite naturally to an understanding of how to make every part of our daily lives into a real ceremony, or to express it another way, how to *sanctify the mundane*. It is dangerous to set ourselves above, or to despise, *anything*. With a correct attitude, pure and aware, it is possible to see and to glorify the Buddha in all that we do and everything that we use - when washing clothes, riding the bus, watching T.V., running a temperature, when feeling bored, or feeling great - the external situation is really not so important. The willingness to look closely at our selfish selves, and, in humility and compassion, do Sange for our past mistakes and sincerely determine not to repeat them is all that it takes. ("All that it takes!" I have exclaimed many times, in exasperation and in disbelief, but this is indeed *all that it takes*.) In the chapter "Do not Stay in Heaven," from *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom*, Rōshi Kennett writes:

I must not wander around up here when there is nothing else to do and there is not a ceremony on; if there is no ceremony I must *make* one. Thus I *make* the monk appear.⁴

Any one of us, lay-trainee or priest, can *make* the monk appear - if we really want to. Or, on the contrary, we can watch our lives sink deeper into the mud of boredom, complacency, and despair, complaining all the while about the injustice of it all as the grey tide of our karma threatens to engulf us. But after training for some time, the monk *does* appear. He may not be obviously present at all times, and we

4. *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom* by Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, Shasta Abbey Press, 1977, p. 100.

may not be conscious of the fact, but he *does* appear and our lives, and the lives of others, are thereby simplified and enriched. *To sanctify the mundane*, seeing the Buddha in all things and in all places, whether or not there is a formal ceremony going on, means that our white robes and koromos can be worn on every occasion, and eventually we come to realize the true meaning of the Teaching that *our square clothes are the symbol of enlightenment*. Living from this place, every gasshō becomes a smile and the stick of incense is always standing up straight and tall. The mutual offering and the grateful acceptance of respect is the *splendour of charity*, the real and lasting fruit of our meditation.

In conclusion, I would like to quote the following passage from the Russian classic of contemplative prayer, *The Way of a Pilgrim*. This passage reflects very clearly, from a Christian point of view, the theme of this article. The word *prayer* in the following context is, in its most important sense, indistinguishable from our use of the word *meditation*.

Everywhere, wherever you may find yourself, you can set up an altar to God in your mind by means of prayer. And so it is fitting to pray at your trade, on a journey, standing at the counter or sitting at your handicraft. Everywhere and in every place it is possible to pray, and, indeed, if a man diligently turns his attention upon himself, then everywhere he will find convenient circumstances for prayer, if only he is convinced of the fact that prayer should constitute his chief occupation and come before every other duty... He would come to know *from experience*...that it is possible to pray at all times, in all circumstances and in every place, and easily to rise from frequent vocal prayer to prayer of the mind, and from that to prayer of the heart, which *opens up the Kingdom of God within us*.⁵

May we all make the monk appear. Here and Now.

5. *The Way of a Pilgrim*, Tr.R.M. French, New York, Ballantine Books, 1974, p. 148 (italics added).

THE SHIPS OF FAME AND THE SHIPS OF GAIN

Rev. Saidō Kennaway, O.B.C.

(Reprinted with permission from The Journal of Shasta Abbey, November-December, 1979.)

A Zen Master and a disciple were standing on a hill overlooking a harbour. They could see many ships moving around on the water. When the Master asked the disciple how many ships he could see, he replied there were so many he couldn't be sure. Then the Master said there are only two ships out there, the ships of fame and the ships of gain.

It seems that we are educated from early on to gain something. I remember sitting exams or taking tests, being graded from a very early age through schools and college (and later on the same thing at work)--diplomas, etc. to prove you know your job so you could 'get on'. There is nothing wrong with tests but there is an attitude of mind that you either have to pass them or be a failure--the attitude of gaining some goal, being important, famous, prosperous, able to afford 'the comforts of life'. You feel you have to do this to be able to live, to be secure, safe and adequate. If you don't then you feel inadequate and insecure. I find this way of thinking still occurs.

Living to gain something or 'be somebody' is not serving our fellow trainees purely. Dōgen Zenji writes, "When we serve our fellow trainees purely hundreds and thousands of lives are enfolded in one single day's or hour's work which will bear fruit for many lives to come. To grasp Truth thus clearly is to express gratitude."¹ Our fellow trainees are

1. "Shōbōgenzō: Tenzo-kyōkan", *Zen is Eternal Life*, Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett, Dharma Publishing, 1976, p.18.

everyone and everything we come into contact with-- the people in the office, the tools and equipment we use, the building we stand in, the animals around us. The purity is in doing what has to be done not for what it brings to us but for its own sake. At the Abbey it means getting up when the bell rings in the morning, doing the work, washing the dishes, cleaning the tools, going to the toilet, caring for the animals, being aware. This is doing all the everyday things as much in the mind of meditation as possible without an idea of gaining something.

This is the ideal but thoughts come up like: I'll do this so that people will like me, I must make this decision or they'll think I'm inadequate, I'll do this so that I can get a kenshō, I want that position so I'll do such and such. It is the 'I'll do this so that I'll gain...' or 'I'll do this or else I'll loose...' that causes the problem.

First we have to find out for ourselves that the way of fame and gain only leads to suffering of some kind, to needing something more which produces despair if we don't get it, to thinking we're doing the right things to 'make the grade' which leads to complacency. When these thoughts arise they are treated like anything else that arises in Zazen. Don't cling to them or try to suppress them; sit still, let them go and bring yourself back to what is in front of you--the next step. This requires faith in the Teaching and becomes the selfless activity with no waste of time whatsoever which Dōgen speaks of in the "Shushōgi". The ships of fame or gain will always appear but it's our choice either to sail with them or let them pass on by.

* * *

ANNOUNCEMENT

If you have had a problem with recently purchased cassette tapes sticking after several playings please return them to the Priory for an exchange.

Celebrations. In a special Memorial Service on October 12 the Priory members celebrated the life of the first Zen Patriarch, Bodhidharma, who brought Buddhism from India to China in the sixth century.

Segaki or the "feeding of the hungry ghosts" was held on the evening of October 31, and was followed by the Founder's Day celebration on November 1. On this important festival date we remember Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett's Master, Keidō Chisan Kōhō Zenji, and offer our special thanks to him for the Transmission of the Dharma.

The Buddha's Enlightenment was celebrated during the winter Rōhatsu sesshin. Although this festival traditionally occurs on December 8, it was held on the 22 at the Priory so that congregation members were able to celebrate it with us.

Several lay trainees joined the Priors in the festivities over the holidays. The beautiful celebration of the Birth of Buddha took place on December 25, during which each person poured sweet tea over the head of the Baby Buddha figure on the altar. This simple act expresses how, through sincere effort in training, we bring to life the Buddha within us, cleansing our being with His all-pervading love.

We welcomed the new year with the traditional midnight ceremony a week later, and a delicious feast was enjoyed by all the following day.

Priory members remembered Rev. Seck Kim Seng, Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett's Ordination Master, in a Memorial Service on January 7, the first anniversary of his death. This date has been designated as Rev. Seck Kim Seng Memorial Day and will be celebrated annually at the Priory in his honour.

Outside Retreats. Rev. Rokuzan Kroenke conducted a weekend Zen retreat on October 3-5 at the Theresiahoeve Centre in Langenboom, Holland.

The Southsea Zazen Group sponsored two 24-hour retreats recently, one conducted by Rev. Teigan Stevens shortly before his return to the U.S. on October 10-11;

the other led by Rev. Teacher Kinzan Learman on January 16-17.

Rev. Teacher Andō Sacco traveled to Fernyhalgh, near Preston, to lead a weekend retreat on November 14-16 which was sponsored by the Lancaster Zazen Group. Fr. Philip McShane, O.P. assisted Rev. Teacher Andō in this retreat as well as a later one in Dublin on the weekend of January 30 to February 1. Both retreats were well attended. Thirty-six people came to the Dublin retreat, many of them non-Buddhists interested in practicing Zazen.

The Gloucestershire Zazen Group was founded with a one-day retreat conducted by Rev. Rokuzan Kroenke in Cirencester on December 5-6.

Zendō Construction. During a work week last October we were able to make a good deal of progress on the exterior stone facing of the new Meditation Hall. The north and west (front) walls were completed, as well as most of the south wall. We would like to thank all the trainees who came to help.

Repairs and Renovation. The interior and exterior walls of the Founder Shrine were carefully repointed last fall to prevent water from seeping in. The Shrine looks much brighter now with a fresh coat of paint. We are continuing work on damp-proofing the floor.

Repairs to roof tiles and the chimney above the Kanzeon Shrine have dealt with the worst of the damp problem we were experiencing there. The old ceiling joists were replaced with stronger ones, a new ceiling and insulation were installed, and a sturdy attic floor was constructed. The Shrine looks completely transformed after much plastering, painting, and redecorating. More work on damp-proofing the north wall is still needed, but the improvement is very significant.

Much needed indoor storage space was created by the rebuilding of sturdy ceilings and attic floors above the kitchen and Kanzeon Shrine, and by opening a hatch to the previously inaccessible attic above one of the bedrooms. All of these ceilings were recently well insulated which has made an enormous difference in keeping the main house warm.

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Gifts. We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who has contributed to Throssel Hole Priory during the past few months through donations of money, food, household, and maintenance items. The Priory received many thoughtful cards and gifts over the holiday season which helped us all enjoy the festivities. Your continuing support is deeply appreciated.

News from Shasta Abbey. Two members of the Throssel Sangha, Helen White of Lydney, Glos., and Ruth Barnhard from Den Haag, Holland, have recently entered the postulancy programme at Shasta Abbey. We offer them our best wishes in their training. Several British and Dutch lay trainees have traveled to Shasta during the fall and winter months to attend the lay training programme there.

We have news that plans have been drawn up for the construction of a new Zendō--Meditation Hall--at the Abbey. It will be built adjacent to the existing Hondō--Ceremony Hall--(currently also being used as the Zendō) and will be almost the same size. The new Zendō will complete the main monastic complex and will provide much more living space for trainees, which is essential as the community grows. Construction will be possible as soon as sufficient funds are available. Any contributions towards the Abbey's Building Fund would be much appreciated.

Upcoming Retreats Outside the Priory. Rev. Teacher Andō will give an evening talk and will lead a day Zen meditation retreat on May 16 and 17 at the Salisbury Centre in Edinburgh. For further details please write Linda Jones at 3, Kirksheaf Cottage, Kirksheaf, Tain, Ross-shire.

An advanced retreat conducted by Rev. Teacher Kinzan will be held at Fernyhalgh, Lancs. on the weekend of May 22-24. Contact Paul Taylor for information at 24 Leachfield Rd., Galgate, Lancaster; Phone: (0524) 751957.



Throssel Hole Priory

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